THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) As per information furnished by High Commission of India in Pakistan, Government of Pakistan has imposed a gerneral ban on export of sugar to all destinations including India.

(c) Import of sugar into India including those for the PDS are allowed freely without license with nil rates of duty from all permissible desitnations. STC and MMTC have also been directed to import sugar for augmenting PDS supplies.

Proposal for one time registration of tobacoo farmers by tobacoo board.

7367. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal before the Tobacco Board to give one time registration to all tobacco farmers in Andhra Pradesh who are not registered with the Tobacco Board;

(b) whether it is also a fact that many tobacco farmers have sought registration with the Board; and

(c) whether the Board has initiated any steps to protect tobacco farmers and their economic interests?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The following steps have been taken:—

(1) The Tobacco Board plans the crop size taking into account the domestic and international demand and supply position.

(2) The Tobacco Board conducts auction sales of FCV tobacco on a transparent basis which ensures prompt and fair payment.

(3) Every year, Government declares minimum support prices for FCV tobacco.

Shrimp seed facility operated by MPEDA

7368. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MPEDA is operating a Shrimp seed facility near Visakhapatnam;

(b) if so, the details thereof:

(c) whether it is also a fact that the shrimp seed farm near Visakhapatnam is not running efficiently; and

(d) steps proposed to improve the efficiency of MPEDA ship seed farm near Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Andhra Pradesh Shrimp seed production supply and Research Centre (TASPARC) is functioning through a society registered under MPEDA. The society became operational in 1989 with an initial capacity of 40 million seeds. Subsequently in December 1991-92, its capacity was doubled to 80 million seeds. As against this, the production sales in 1993-94 were 118 million seeds, which is well over the rate capacity.

Liberalisation of diesel subsidy scheme of MPEDA

7369. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been considering liberalisation of the